

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 19766 191134Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9225

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SUBJ: THAI-NORTH VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

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FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ITSARANGKUN NA AYUTTHAYA
ADDRESSED THE BANGKOK ROTARY DECEMBER 19 ON THE TOPIC
"SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE". FOLLOWING
ARE HIS COMMENTS ON NORTH VIETNAM:

"TURNING NOW FROM FRIENDS TO COUNTRIES WITH VASTLY
DIFFERENT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS WHO HAVE
REMAINED ALOOF AND EVEN ESTRANGED FROM US FOR A LONG
TIME, IT IS CERTAINLY HARD TO EXPECT THAT EVEN A MODICUM
OF UNDERSTANDING WOULD BE SO READILY FORTHCOMING FROM
THAT QUARTER. HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT NEITHER
IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES NOR THE LONG PERIOD OF ESTRANGE-
MENT NECESSARILY PRECLUDES THE PROSPECT OF A WORTHWHILE
DIALOGUE; AT LEAST, THIS SEEMS TO BE TRUE IN THE CASE OF
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA WHERE THE COUNTRIES OF THE
SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION HAVE FOUND IN THE COURSE OF OPENING
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 19766 191134Z

CONTACT AND DEVELOPING NEW RELATIONS THAT THE ATTITUDE

OF ACCOMMODATION HAS REPLACED THE RIGIDITIES OF THE PAST. IT IS THEREFORE READILY APPARENT THAT IF THERE IS TO BE ANY RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN ANY GIVEN PAIR OF COUNTRIES, THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT, THAT IS, THE WILL BE MOVE CLOSER, MUST BE THERE ON BOTH SIDES. ON THE CONTRARY, IF AND SO LONG AS ONE PARTY CHOOSES TO PERSIST IN ITS COCOON-LIKE EXISTENCE, NURSING ITS OLD WOUNDS AND LABOURING UNDER SELF-INDUCED FEAR, MISTRUST, AND SUSPICION, IT WOULD BE WELL-KNIGH IMPOSSIBLE FOR IT TO HAVE ANY MEANINGFUL CONTACT WITH ANYONE ELSE, SAVE PERHAPS WITH THOSE CONSIDERED USEFUL FOR ITS IMMEDIATE SELFISH INTEREST. IF ONLY SUCH A COUNTRY COULD OR WOULD DISCARD ITS RIP VAN WINKLE MENTALITY AND WAKE UP TO THE REALITY OF THE WORLD AND THE REGION, IT WOULD FIND THAT TODAY FAR AND WIDE THERE ARE COUNTRIES, SOME OF WHOM (ARE) EVEN OLD ADVERSARIES SUBSCRIBING TO DIFFERENT POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES, CO-EXISTING PEACEFULLY AND ENJOYING A REASONABLE MEASURE OF CONTACT AND RELATIONS. SUCH PROSPECT IS UNDERIABLY A DESIRABLE END WHICH ALL CAN AND SHOULD PROMOTE FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE AND STABILITY IN OUR REGION. THE IMMEDIATE QUESTION, HOWEVER, IS ONE OF MEANS. WHATEVER WAYS MAY EVENTUALLY BE FOUND, IT IS HARDLY CONCEIVABLE THAT THEY BE FOUND THROUGH DIGGING UP OLD GRUDGES AND SETTING THEM UP AS PRECONDITIONS BEFORE ANY CONTACT OR DIALOGUE CAN EVEN BEGIN. AND SPEAKING ABOUT ISOLATIONIST EXISTENCE DEVOID OF PURPOSEFUL CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE, I MUST CONFESS THAT I WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT AT A RECENT INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN THE CAPITAL OF ONE OF THE REGIONAL COUNTRIES WHERE 9 SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED, NORTH VIETNAM, THE ONLY OTHER COUNTRY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, WAS CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT."

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